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August 28, 2015

TO: Chairman Nofs and Members of the Senate Energy and Technology Committee
FROM: West Michigan Environmental Action Council
RE: Senate Bills 437-438 (S2); oppose

Dear Chairman Nofs,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Thank you for the considerable time and effort you, your staff, and the Committee have put into this legislation. Unfortunately, despite all the hard work that has gone into this legislation, WMEAC must oppose it as written, because it takes Michigan backward.

Last week, The American Lung Association gave Kent County an F for Ozone air pollution. Mercury pollution is still so ubiquitous in Michigan's rivers, lakes, and streams that families should consult Michigan's Eat Safe Fish Guide before they eat any of the fish they catch.

Air pollution, water pollution, asthma, lung and cardiovascular diseases, and a myriad of other costs resulting from the combustion of fossil fuels for energy are borne everyday by the citizens of Michigan.

Mr. Chairman, in 2008 you and others passed major energy legislation that began to address these issues. We agree that that legislation has 'served us well.'

Primum non nocere: First, Do No Harm

PA 295's energy efficiency and renewable energy mandates were not broken. They were working. They do not need to be repealed; they need to be continued and expanded.

This committee has heard hours of testimony documenting the incredible success of energy efficiency and renewable energy standards in Michigan. The drive to repeal such successful public policy just does not make sense.

WMEAC agrees that Michigan should be in control of its energy future. There is no better way of doing that than through massive investments in energy efficiency and other demand side management resources. These are investments in our homes, our communities and our energy infrastructure. Energy efficiency is the cleanest, cheapest, and most quickly deployed source of energy available to Michiganders.

Instead, we have a proposal in SB 437 and 438 S2 that will end our existing, successful programs; and replace them with a goal, a planning process, and incentives that offer no guarantee to ratepayers that we will sustain investments in our cheapest energy resource – energy efficiency and demand side





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management. Why not lock down energy savings for Michigan ratepayers? Why not make that promise to Michiganders?

The current bills leave cost savings, risk mitigation, and ongoing environmental progress in doubt. The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy has testified in that past, and I'm sure will again, that IRP's and incentives just don't work as well as standards. In fact, they have documented that states perform about 2/3rds worse without standards.

Finally, there is an argument that carve outs will skew the IRP evaluation process – that standards unfairly picking winners and losers. This might be a fair critique if the proposed IRP process, and existing energy infrastructure didn't pick winners – which it does – incumbent utilities and fossil fuels.

Energy efficiency and renewable energy standards level the playing field for the public interest: cleaner air, cleaner water, eliminating energy waste and mitigating fuel risks. Standards are needed for accountability.

Please lock down cost savings, risk mitigation, and environmental protection for Michiganders by continuing and expanding the renewable and efficient energy standards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Occhipinti", written in a cursive style.

Nicholas Occhipinti
WMEAC Policy Director

